



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION IX

75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

JUL 11 2011

Oscar Villanueva, J-60178  
Kern Valley State Prison  
P.O. Box 5104-D-3-117  
Delano, California 93216

Dear Mr. Villanueva:

Thank you for your letter of March 24, 2011 to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Washington, D.C. In early June, your letter was forwarded to the EPA Region 9 office in San Francisco for our response.

In your letter, you expressed concern that the water served at the Kern Valley State Prison (KVSP) exceeds the state and federal drinking water standards for arsenic and that no alternate water supply has been made available to inmates at KVSP.

California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has been delegated primary enforcement authority for implementation of the Public Water Supply Supervision program and EPA has an oversight role.

Using its primary enforcement authority, CDPH has issued a compliance (enforcement) order to KVSP for the arsenic violation. Although CDPH has discretion to require a public water system to comply with interim measures such as the provision of a temporary alternate water supply while the system installs treatment, this is not currently a provision of the compliance order. Our office has forwarded your letter to CDPH for their review and consideration.

KVSP has been moving forward with its plans to design and construct an arsenic removal treatment system but has had some setbacks due to funding issues. The engineering design is complete and a request for proposals has been advertised. The current schedule is:

- Bid opening: August 11, 2011
- Target construction start date: September 25, 2011
- An estimated project completion of 12 months (September 2012)

You may write directly to CDPH at the following address:

California Department of Public Health  
District 12 Engineer  
Drinking Water Program  
265 West Bullard Avenue, Suite 101  
Fresno, CA 93704

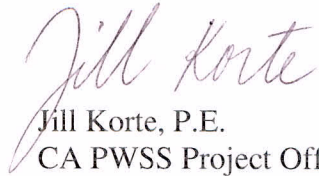
You may also wish to contact the Prison Law Office, an organization that assists inmates with changing conditions of confinement, as resources allow. They can be contacted at:

Prison Law Office  
General Delivery  
San Quentin, CA 94964

The Safe Drinking Water Act requires EPA to set drinking water goals for contaminants of concern at levels below known or anticipated adverse effects on people with an adequate margin of safety. Because of the human variation in response to environment, EPA sets drinking water standards to protect those that might be most vulnerable to the contaminant of concern. EPA's risk assessments use conservative factors to address these more vulnerable people.

We understand your concerns and hope this letter helps to answer some of your questions and better direct the others. Please contact our office again if we can be of additional assistance.

Sincerely,



Jill Korte, P.E.  
CA PWSS Project Officer

Cc: CDPH District 12 Engineer (Visalia)